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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2011

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The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
H-307 Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
1016 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Young and Ranking Member Dicks:

Thank you for your support of the ALS Research Program within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011. Your support is helping to advance the search for a treatment for ALS, better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. I respectfully request that you support a \$15 million appropriation for the program in the FY 2012 Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

ALS is a fatal neurodegenerative disease that destroys a person's ability to control muscle movement. As the disease progresses, people become trapped inside a body they no longer can control, aware of the world around them, but powerless to do anything about it. The average life expectancy for a person with ALS is just two to five years after diagnosis. There is no effective treatment for the disease, no known cause and no cure.

I believe that it is important for the DOD to identify and research all diseases that may be related to service in the U.S. military, including ALS. According to numerous studies, military veterans are approximately twice as likely to die from ALS as those who have not served in the military. These findings were most recently confirmed by a 2009 study conducted by researchers at Harvard University and funded by the DOD and National Institutes of Health.

The ALS Research Program is an innovative program that is designed to translate basic science into new treatments for ALS by funding high risk-high reward projects that fill the gaps in NIH funded research. The program also supports the best science,

providing support to researchers in the private sector on a peer-reviewed competitive grant basis to avoid duplication and help ensure that the most promising research receives the resources needed to move forward.

The current \$8 million appropriation will only be able to support six projects even though nearly 150 proposals were submitted to the ALS Research Program in 2010. Increasing the appropriation to \$15 million in FY 2012 will enable DOD to take advantage of vital research opportunities and help us move closer to finding a treatment this horrific disease. Therefore, I strongly support a \$15 million appropriation for this program in FY 2012.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce Braley", with a stylized, cursive script.

Bruce Braley